

Train company fined over trip from hell



First Capital Connect conceded: **w**We didn't live up to our own high standards**w** Newscast/Ally Carmichael/FA

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A train operator pleaded guilty yesterday to breaching health and safety laws after 700 passengers were left stranded on a crowded commuter train without toilets, air conditioning or adequate updates from the driver for three hours.

First Capital Connect received a fine of £75,000 and was ordered to pay costs of £27,718 at Blackfriars Crown Court after criminal proceedings launched by the Office of Rail Regulation.

The ORR said the train company had failed to plan properly its response to deal with stranded passengers or to provide passengers with accurate information, working ventilation and toilets.

Ian Prosser, ORR's director of safety, said: "Passengers were treated with a distinct lack of care, as the company committed a catalogue of errors.

"ORR is monitoring the company and will not hesitate to take action to ensure passengers are not placed in such a position again. Accurate and timely passenger information is essential not only for those planning journeys, but ... for the safe running of the railways."

The discomfort became so intense outside St Pancras Station in May 2011 that 40 passengers jumped from the train and tried to walk to safety along a tunnel. When a delayed rescue vehicle finally arrived to pull the train to the next station, the driver moved the locomotive without realising that people were still exiting the rear coaches, that others were walking between the train and tunnel walls and that yet more passengers were standing in crowded carriages next to open doors.

David Statham, First Capital Connect's managing director, said: "We deeply regret what happened. We didn't live up to our own high standards in the way we handled this event, which is why we took quick and decisive action afterwards. We have new processes, techniques and equipment to speed the process [evacuation] whenever possible and to make it more comfortable for those on board."

3 comments

Michael Daventry

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it'sme

7 days ago

A pitiful penalty which will be paid for by the consumer and subsidised by the taxpayer-perhaps the rationale which framed it!

Once again responsibility and accountability walk free.

2 Recommend Reply



John Cummings

8 days ago

Nowhere near a large enough penalty. The fine is peanuts for a company with an eight-figure turnover.

3 Recommend Reply



Mrs Christine Cutter

8 days ago

@John Cummings and subsidised by the taxpayer.

3 Recommend Reply

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